



**COUNTY OF FAUQUIER
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Denise M. Harris, Project Officer

DATE: January 12, 2006

RE: Acceptance of Grant Application to DCR's Water Quality Improvement Fund

Last August under the leadership of Supervisor Atherton, Fauquier County convened a Riparian Buffer Easement Program Solutions Team of key stakeholders from state, regional and local agencies, as well as advocacy groups, to collaborate on the development of a potential Riparian Buffer Easement Program. The series of meetings was facilitated by the Piedmont Dispute Resolution Center and paid for by a grant awarded to the University of Virginia's Institute of Environmental Negotiation. The goal of the meetings was to explore a Riparian Buffer Easement Program that would preserve, protect and improve the quality and quantity of water in Fauquier County.

The meetings concluded in November with a Declaration of Cooperation (DOC) signed by each of the participants. The DOC outlines all the outstanding issues associated with a possible Riparian Buffer Easement Program and the proposed structure. Individual stakeholders wrote and signed a statement summarizing their support for a future riparian program and their ongoing level of involvement. (All documents mentioned in this memo are attached as part of the grant.)

Concurrently, the Commonwealth of Virginia is developing Tributary Strategy Implementation Plans to reduce non-point source pollution for Fauquier County. These plans are part of the Chesapeake Bay 2010 Agreement that Virginia must implement for the Environmental Protection Agency. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Tributary Strategy Input Deck for Fauquier County focuses on riparian buffers as a key implementation component.

It is believed that once the Tributary Strategy Implementation Plans are completed in early 2006 the Commonwealth will be expecting localities to take an active

role in executing the plans. In order to help localities, the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund was created to provide resources for the very purpose of implementing the Tributary Strategy goals. Grant funding has been made available for up to four years to localities who can demonstrate they are working to reduce non-point source pollutants highlighted in the Tributary Strategies.

Due to the complex nature of establishing a self-sustaining, comprehensive Riparian Buffer Easement Program, Fauquier County has applied to the Water Quality Improvement Fund to fund a full time position with benefits and related monitoring equipment. The total grant request is approximately \$96,000 annually with a 50% in-kind match from the County of existing staff hours. The grant request requires no new funding from Fauquier County.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation issued a Request for Grant Applications late in 2005 on a very tight timeframe. Staff submitted the grant to meet the deadline with the understanding by both the state and County that the grant still needs to be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Therefore, staff respectfully requests that the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors accept the grant application to the Water Quality Improvement Fund. Grants will be awarded by the end of February 2006 for the upcoming fiscal year.